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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 003024

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2017

TAGS: PROG PREL PGOV KS KN

SUBJECT: MOFAT READOUT OF NORTH-SOUTH SUMMIT: ROH "WENT TO BAT" FOR U.S.

Classified By: Amb. Alexander Vershbow. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

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SUMMARY  
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11. (C) In an October 5 meeting with the Ambassador, Vice Foreign Minister Cho Jung-pyo said that the ROK had reached a comprehensive agreement on the future direction of inter-Korean relations during the North-South Summit. Peace, inter-Korean economic cooperation, and reconciliation were the major takeaways for the ROK. An agreement on the need for a peace regime to replace the Armistice and Kim Jong-il's public commitment to pursue denuclearization through the Six-Party Talks were also major achievements. The Northern Limit Line (NLL) was not discussed, though a proposal by Roh to turn disputed areas in and around the West Sea (Yellow Sea) into a joint fishing area was accepted by Kim Jong-il, with details to be worked out by Defense Ministers following ROK coordination with the United Nations Command/U.S. Forces Korea (UNC/USFK). Cho emphasized that President Roh made clear that further inter-Korean economic cooperation would be dependent on progress on the nuclear issue in the Six Party Talks. The two, Roh told Kim, would have to be mutually reinforcing structures. The Ambassador welcomed Kim Jong-il's commitment to implement the Six-Party Talks agreements, but reiterated the U.S. position that a peace regime to end the Korean War could only follow complete denuclearization. END SUMMARY.

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Denuclearization  
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12. (C) Cho said that Roh "went to bat" on the nuclear issue on behalf of the U.S., stressing that progress in inter-Korean economic cooperation efforts would be contingent

on progress in the Six Party Talks. In response, Kim Jong-il reportedly called in Kim Gye-gwan, Vice Foreign Minister and lead DPRK negotiator for the 6PT, to report on the status of the 6PT. VFM Kim cited a lack of U.S. action on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and Trading with the Enemies Act, as well as its insistence that the DPRK address the Japan abductees issue, as the major roadblocks to the implementation of 6PT agreements. Kim Jong-il said that the DPRK had given its best effort in order to reach an agreement for the second phase, and that all parties should carry out their commitments specified in the October 3 Six Party agreement as soon as possible. Cho pointed out that Roh ultimately obtained a commitment by Kim Jong-il to resolve the nuclear issue through the Six Party Talks in accordance with the September 19, 2005 and February 13, 2007 agreements.

¶13. (C) The Ambassador thanked the ROKG for its efforts in extracting a public promise from Kim Jong-il to denuclearize, noting Kim Jong-il's signature and public statement committing to denuclearization. Cho stated that the ROK had tried to include the denuclearization pledges of the 1992 North-South Basic Agreement and the October 3 6PT agreement in the summit's Joint Declaration, but had been unable to persuade the DPRK to include this language. The DPRK, however, said the October 3, 2007 agreement was part of the February 13, 2007 agreement.

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Peace Regime  
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¶14. (C) VFM Cho said that Roh raised the need for the two Koreas to take the lead on peace regime discussions, but also emphasized that peace regime efforts would be contingent on progress in the DPRK's denuclearization efforts. Roh conveyed President Bush's remarks that he had "already made his decision" on pursuing a potential peace treaty with the DPRK, and emphasized that Kim Jong-il should make the most of this opportunity. Kim was receptive to Bush's statement, and expressed a desire to hold a U.S.-DPRK summit. Kim agreed in principle to work toward a peace regime, and asked about U.S.-ROK discussions on a potential declaration to end the Korean War.

¶15. (C) Cho Byung-jae, Director General of North American Affairs, said that the "three or four directly related parties" language on peace regime was suggested by Roh, but did not explain why. Only the U.S., DPRK, and ROK should negotiate the strictly military portions of a peace agreement. The DPRK agreed that the two Koreas should play "leading roles" for the peace regime discussions, so there was no question that the ROK would be included in both the three and four party discussions. DG Cho stated that Kim and Roh agreed in principle on the need for a future summit meeting, including the U.S. President, to officially end the Korean War. This would be different from a peace treaty, DG Cho said. DG Cho later called the Embassy to retract his statement that the "three or four" language had been President Roh's idea. Cho said that the ROK had wanted the "directly related parties" language from the September 19, 2005 6PT agreement, but the DPRK had held firm on the "three or four parties" language. Another MOFAT DG told Pol M/C that the "three or four parties" language was proposed by Roh. COMMENT: Post believes that this indicates that Roh was, in fact, the first to raise the "three or four parties" language. DG Cho was probably cautioned after the meeting with the Ambassador for revealing this point, which was probably why he retracted his statement almost immediately.  
END COMMENT.

¶16. (C) The Ambassador replied that an end-of-war declaration and a peace treaty were essentially the same idea, in the U.S. view, and that the U.S. would be unlikely to support an interim summit meeting to declare an end to the Korean War. The Ambassador stated that a final agreement on a peace regime, including a peace treaty, would be possible only after complete denuclearization by the DPRK, as President

Bush had stated in Sydney. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation that this was made clear to Kim Jong-il by President Roh, but urged the ROK to make this clear publicly as well, lest there be any perception of U.S.-ROK differences on the subject.

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Security Issues  
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¶ 7. (C) VFM Cho confirmed that the Northern Limit Line (NLL) would remain unchanged from the current status quo.

President Roh had proposed the "West Sea Peace Area" as a way of shifting the dialogue on the issue from a military one to an economic one. After Kim Jong-il sought input from his defense-related advisors, he agreed to the principle of transforming the disputed West Sea area into a special economic zone, Cho said. The details of the idea, including the logistics of NLL crossings by civilian ships, would be further fleshed out during the meeting of the Defense Ministers in November. The ROK would actively consult with the UNC/USFK before the meeting.

¶ 8. (C) Cho noted that the two sides agreed to the termination of hostilities, the use of dialogue in settling disputes, mutual nonaggression, and opposition to war on the peninsula.

Further demilitarization of the border areas, including

guard post pullbacks, were not discussed. The DPRK also made no mention of the U.S. Forces Korea or the Ulchi Focus Lens exercise.

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Economic Cooperation  
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¶ 9. (C) President Roh conveyed his goal of transforming inter-Korean economic cooperation into a long-term and reciprocal relationship to Kim Jong-il. Roh emphasized that the DPRK had to work to reduce barriers to the business community, and ensure military cooperation on joint economic projects. Progress on the nuclear issue had been taken into consideration and was reflected in the expansion of joint economic projects with the DPRK. Roh also stressed that DPRK-Japan and DPRK-U.S. relations needed to improve in order to allay investor concerns about the economic climate of the DPRK.

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Inter-Korean Reconciliation  
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¶ 10. (C) VFM Cho stated that the ROK had made progress on the issue of North-South family reunions, but not on ROK abductees or POWs. The 2000 North-South Joint Declaration remained the authoritative statement on unification, so the two summit heads simply reaffirmed those points on unification. Roh told Kim that the South Korean public did not want a sudden Germany-style unification, but rather a gradual unification of the two Koreas.

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Atmosphere of Dialogue  
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¶ 11. (C) VFM Cho believed that the overall atmosphere of the summit discussions was very quiet and businesslike. The atmosphere of the Day 1 sessions between Roh and Kim Yong-nam was "rigid," as Kim Yong-nam adhered strictly to the party line during discussions. During the morning session of the second day, there were noticeable disputes between Roh and Kim Jong-il, though by the afternoon most of the issues had been smoothed out. In particular, Kim was displeased by characterization of the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) as an effort to "open" and "reform" DPRK society. Cho said that Kim Jong-il cancelled the offer to extend the summit by one day after most of the issues had been resolved during the second day's afternoon session.

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Future Summits  
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¶12. (C) Roh told Kim Jong-il he wanted North-South summits to be held once a year. Kim Jong-il wanted them "as frequently as necessary." Kim Jong-il opposed calling for "regular" meetings in the declaration, emphasizing that the relationship between the two Koreas was not of the state-to-state variety. When Roh invited Kim Jong-il to visit Seoul, Kim Jong-il proposed that Kim Yong-nam, the titular head of state, visit instead, and that Kim Jong-il might visit after the "relevant conditions" were met.

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Comment  
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¶13. (C) It was clear that MOFAT was left out of the loop on the summit planning, and the debriefing to the Ambassador -- a recitation of canned talking points -- showed their lack of access to the more substantive meetings. Other MOFAT contacts told Post that Foreign Minister Song had objected to the language of "three or four" related parties to a potential peace regime, but that phrase ultimately made its way into the official Joint Declaration. Still, the repeated emphasis on denuclearization by President Roh, and the subsequent commitment in the Joint Declaration by Kim Jong-il, are solid achievements for MOFAT. END COMMENT.  
VERSHBOW